

# **BAR-BENCH-MEDIA CONFERENCE**

## **AGENDA**

Thursday, June 20, 1996

At 1:00 p.m.

Family Court - Dover

- I. Approval of Minutes
- II. Election of New Officers
- III. Report of Education Committee
- IV. Report of Internet Committee
- V. Justice Center Resolution
- VI. Discussion Topic
- VII. Old Business
- VIII. New Business

Next meeting scheduled for: August 15, 1996

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF  
THE BAR-BENCH-MEDIA CONFERENCE**

A meeting of the Bar-Bench-Media Conference was held on Thursday, June 20, 1996 at the Family Court, Dover. The meeting was open to the public. Notice of the meeting had been posted. The members of the Conference in attendance were:

**Members from the Print News Media**

Tammy Brittingham

**Members from the Electronic News Media**

Marilyn Buerkle

Mike Sigman

**Members from the Bench**

Judge Jay Paul James

Judge Roderick R. McKelvie

Judge Henry duPont Ridgely

**Members from the Bar**

Eugene H. Bayard, Esquire

Howard Handleman, Esquire

Tammy Brittingham called the meeting to order. The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Election of New Officers: Chairman: Judge Roderick R. McKelvie; Vice-Chairman: Mike Sigman; Secretary: Peter T. Dalleo. The question of a quorum being present was raised.

Report of the Internet Committee: Judge McKelvie reported that the committee continued to work on planning a conference in the Spring of 1997.

Report of the Education Committee: Changed the next meeting date from August 15 to September 19, 1996. The meeting in September will be held at the Supreme Court in Wilmington.

Discussed the proposed format of future meetings. Favored inviting a guest speaker to present a professional perspective for about ten minutes, perhaps with handouts, followed by a group discussion of the topic for about twenty minutes. The group would then address other business on the agenda.

Discussed potential topics for the next year (see attached list). Questions raised about what the media, bar, bench would like to know; a preference expressed for treating concerns or areas of interest as general topics rather than settling on an individual case. Such discussion might clarify potential concerns between lawyers and media; it might lead to resource materials for everyone which could possibly be disseminated in magazines such as *In Re*.

Guest Mike Pelrine, editor of *The Daily Whale*, introduced the discussion about terms such as "off the record," "background," "not for attribution." Distributed copies of *Newsroom Guidelines for Independent Newspapers*. Members of the media present agreed that universal definitions for these terms did not exist; that each organization had its own understanding of them. Belief expressed by some that if standardized definitions existed, then members of the bar might be more forthcoming about sharing the wealth of information that they had. Suggestions offered about obtaining information included the asking direct questions of lawyers from both sides of a case or consulting members of the Media Contacts list which needs to be updated (see attached). The media could also consult members of the Three-Lawyer Bar Committee which responds to media questions about court-related matters. Since judges were under great restraint from discussing cases and procedures were published elsewhere, retired judges might be a good source of information.

Settled on two start-up themes: (1) Changing Community Values - Same Sex Marriages on September 19, 1996, Wilmington; (2) Private Property and Privacy on October 17, 1996, Wilmington.

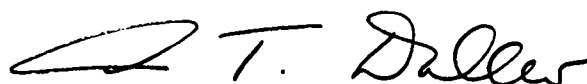
Outgoing chairperson Tammy Brittingham thanked members of the Bar-Bench-Media

Conference for their support. She believed that the information exchanged and the flow of ideas at these meetings reduced apprehension and kept communication open among the groups represented in the Conference.

Old Business: It was decided to defer discussion on the Justice Center until a later date.

The next meeting of the Conference is scheduled for Thursday, September 19 at 1:00 p.m. in the Supreme Court in Wilmington.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. T. Deller". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a distinct "T" and "Deller" following.

Attachments